

9 November 1955

25X1

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Capt. L. O. Mathews, USN,
Chief of Staff to Admiral Richard E. Byrd

Present: Capt. L. O. Mathews, USN
Cdr. E. C. Blount, USN, deputy to Capt. R. E. Styles
LCdr. John Madden, USN
Capt. K. A. Knowles
Col. R. H. Bobert

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NO CHANGE IN

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NEXT REVIEW

AUTH: HR 7.2

DATE: 8 NOV 1955

1. This meeting was arranged as a result of a telephone call yesterday from Capt. Mathews, Chief of Staff to Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Capt. Mathews said in the call that he had recently reported for duty as Chief of Staff and that Adm. Byrd, as a result of his appointment to Officer in Charge of the U. S. Antarctic Program, wished to render certain reports to OCB regarding the Antarctic Program. Among these reports was to be included the status of the NIS on Antarctica. Since this matter was classified I requested that Capt. Mathews, together with the Navy member of the NIS Committee, meet with me this morning to discuss the problem.

2. Capt. Mathews said that, in amplification of his conversation yesterday and in view of Adm. Byrd's large authority stemming from the Deputy Secretary of Defense letter of 21 October 1955, he desired to render a comprehensive report of the over-all Antarctic Program to the OCB prior to his departure to the Antarctic which is to occur approximately 23 November.

3. I explained to Capt. Mathews that the requirement for an NIS on Antarctica stemmed from Adm. Dufek's letter of 16 August 1955, the purpose of this requirement being to pull together all information on Antarctica relative to history, geography, and economic value as a basis for U.S. policy decision as to (a) most valuable areas of the continent, and (b) the legal position of various countries vis-a-vis claims to parts of Antarctica. I further stated that the NIS Committee had accepted the responsibility as a result of meetings on 23 and 30 August 1955 and would accord priority to this requirement to a degree necessary to complete the NIS on Antarctica by early next year. All this had been reported in a letter from me to Adm. Dufek on 1 September 1955. Inasmuch as this specified the detailed requirement and indicated the time of completion, I questioned whether any interim report would be any more meaningful since all agencies charged with fulfilling this responsibility had already reported being on schedule.

25 YEAR
RE-REVIEW

2 Xtras in file "Xtra"

Meeting with Capt. Mathews**9 November 1955**

4. Capt. Mathews said that, while this would be adequate in terms of general status report, Adm. Byrd desired that a letter be addressed to him reporting the actual status quo of the project so that he might officially include it in his report to OCB. I told Capt. Mathews that it was the desire of CIA and of the NIS Committee to assist the Admiral in every possible way. In view of this I felt that such a letter could be written certainly as a courtesy to Adm. Byrd, and unless my Agency had objections I would prepare it and send it to him before the deadline indicated above (23 November).

5. In addition to this arrangement which was fully satisfactory to Capt. Mathews, I pointed out that Lieut. (jg) G. Hampton had called upon me and on other NIS Committee members to inquire about the number of people working on the project and their actual names and locations. From his attitude it appeared that there was some concern on the part of Adm. Byrd's staff as to the reliability of the material which we were putting together in view of the fact that no experts on Antarctica were utilized to compile the Survey. I pointed out to Capt. Mathews that inasmuch as all the experts were going with Task Force 43 to Antarctica, each agency was utilizing the best available talent; and inasmuch as the information is being extracted from official reports of previous experts, there would not seem to be any question that valid information would be forthcoming. At the same time I indicated to Capt. Mathews that we would welcome any assistance that could be given by Adm. Byrd or his staff on improving the NIS on Antarctica.

7. Capt. Mathews said that Adm. Byrd would be in Washington next week and he would take that occasion to indicate our desires to assist him in every way and to get such expert counsel as the Admiral could accord the survey.

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